



Connecticut Association
of Theatre Owners

March 5, 2015

COMMENTS REGARDING CONNECTICUT RAISED BILL No. 6933:
AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING FOR EMPLOYEES

On behalf of CATO (Connecticut Association of Theatre Owners), an association representing Movie Theatres throughout Connecticut, we respectfully submit these written comments in opposition of Connecticut Bill 6933. Our position is based on the following concerns:

- The motion picture business is unique and unpredictable. Film bookings can vary drastically from week to week, and attendance can fluctuate based on public reaction and news. We respectfully submit that movie theatres should be exempt from this proposed legislation.
- Movie theatre work schedules are dependent on film availability, film running times, and attendance. Theatre managers do not have a 21 day advanced notice on what will be playing in their theatres. Final booking of films to hold-over or open on a Friday, are only confirmed on a Monday or Tuesday following the prior weekend, and even then it is unknown how much attendance a new film may generate.
- While theatre owners understand the intent of this legislation may be to give more certainty to those earning as "head of household", the majority of theatre employees are part-timers working to earn discretionary funds rather than support for themselves.
- Theatre employees are primarily students in their first jobs or senior citizens that have actually sought to work in a business with flexibility, and work between 12-20 hours per week. For students in particular, working in a motion picture theatre is attractive because of the flexibility allowed in scheduling to accommodate their changing coursework, school and social activities. While theatre managers work with employees to accommodate their schedules, employees also understand the need to work flexible schedules to accommodate varying attendance levels once the films are booked in the theatres.
- While analysts may predict huge attendance at some "blockbusters", or low attendance at "sleepers", they are often way off the mark and staffing levels may need to be adjusted to handle the crowds or lack thereof. Either way, the schedule for the following week would have to be adjusted in order to staff appropriately.
- The 21 day advance scheduling window would also make it impossible to offer expanded work shifts for unanticipated events, such as when the theatre is requested to add a last minute showing for a community or school group. This is a frequent occurrence for theatres that accommodate special events and birthday parties outside their normal operating hours.
- Because theatres pay the lion's share of their box office income to film distributors, theatres already operate on slim margins. Adding the unavoidable penalty of "predictability pay" created in this proposed legislation may force some marginal theatres to close.

It is for these reasons that we urge you to consider not only the impact this legislation would have on Connecticut's movie theatres, but also the negative impact to their employees who desire and may need a flexible schedule. Please vote "no" on 6933, or amend the legislation to exempt movie theatres accordingly.

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Murdoch
Executive Director

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